

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4229

To reaffirm the principles and objectives set forth in the United States-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 20, 2020

Mr. WYDEN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To reaffirm the principles and objectives set forth in the United States-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Hong Kong People’s Freedom and Choice Act”.

6 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
7 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Definitions.

Sec. 3. Findings.

Sec. 4. Statement of policy.

Sec. 5. Protection for Hong Kong residents in the United States.

See. 6. Differential treatment of Hong Kong residents for immigration purposes.

See. 7. Admission for certain highly skilled Hong Kong residents.

See. 8. Adjustment to lawful permanent resident status of certain nationals of the PRC.

See. 9. Reporting requirements.

See. 10. Strategy for international cooperation on Hong Kong.

See. 11. Sunset.

1 SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

2 In this Act:

3 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
4 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
5 mittees” means—

6 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of
7 the Senate;

8 (B) the Committee on the Judiciary of the
9 Senate;

10 (C) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
11 the House of Representatives; and

12 (D) the Committee on the Judiciary of the
13 House of Representatives.

14 (2) BASIC LAW.—The term “Basic Law” means
15 the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Adminis-
16 trative Region of the PRC.

17 (3) HONG KONG.—The term “Hong Kong”
18 means the Hong Kong Special Administrative Re-
19 gion.

20 (4) NPC.—The term “NPC” means the Na-
21 tional People’s Congress of the PRC.

1 (5) PRC.—The term “PRC” means the Peo-
2 ple’s Republic of China.

3 (6) PRIORITY HONG KONG RESIDENT.—The
4 term “priority Hong Kong resident” means—

5 (A) any lawful resident of Hong Kong or
6 lawful permanent residents of Hong Kong who,
7 as of the date of the enactment of this Act—
8 (i) holds no right to citizenship or
9 residency in any country or jurisdiction
10 other than in the PRC, Hong Kong, or
11 Macau; and

12 (ii) has continuously resided in Hong
13 Kong during the 10-year period ending on
14 such date of enactment; and

15 (B) the immediate family member of any
16 person described in subparagraph (A).

17 (7) SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION.—The
18 term “Sino-British Joint Declaration” means the
19 Joint Declaration of the Government of the United
20 Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and
21 the Government of the People’s Republic of China
22 on the Question of Hong Kong, done at Beijing De-
23 cember 19, 1984.

24 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

25 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The NPC has committed to pass national
2 security legislation which, if enacted, would—

3 (A) contravene the will of the people of
4 Hong Kong whose constitution, the Basic Law,
5 provides in Article 23 that the Legislative
6 Council of Hong Kong shall enact legislation re-
7 lated to national security;

8 (B) violate the PRC's commitments under
9 international law, as defined by the Sino-British
10 Joint Declaration; and

11 (C) cause severe and irreparable damage to
12 the “one country, two systems” principle and
13 further erode global confidence in the PRC's
14 commitment to international law.

15 (2) The United States has a long and proud
16 history as a destination for refugees and asylees flee-
17 ing persecution based on race, religion, nationality,
18 political opinion, or membership in a particular so-
19 cial group.

20 (3) The United States also shares deep social,
21 cultural, and economic ties with the people of Hong
22 Kong, including a shared commitment to democracy,
23 to the rule of law, and to the protection of human
24 rights.

1 (4) The United States has sheltered, protected,
2 and welcomed individuals who have fled oppression
3 of authoritarian regimes, including citizens from the
4 PRC following the violent June 4, 1989, crackdown
5 in Tiananmen Square, which has deepened ties be-
6 tween the people of the United States and individ-
7 uals, regardless of nationality, who are seeking to
8 contribute to a free, open society founded on respect
9 for the rule of law.

10 (5) The United States has reaped enormous
11 economic, cultural, and strategic benefits from wel-
12 coming successive generations of scientists, doctors,
13 entrepreneurs, artists, intellectuals, and other free-
14 dom-loving people fleeing Fascism, Communism, vio-
15 lent Islamist extremism, and other repressive
16 ideologies, including Nazi Germany, the Soviet
17 Union, Soviet-controlled Central Europe, Cuba, Viet-
18 nam, and Iran.

19 (6) Offering prospective refuge to the people
20 who have contributed the most to Hong Kong's suc-
21 cess would signal to the Chinese Communist Party
22 that repression in Hong Kong would result in losing
23 some of its immense wealth and talent to the United
24 States.

1 (7) A mid-2020 Brookings report states, “Chi-
2 nese officials see the United States’ continued ability
3 to attract and retain Chinese talent as a serious im-
4 pediment to their technological ambitions”.

5 (8) A 2009 report published in Issues in
6 Science and Technology states, “competition for
7 [science and technology] brainpower . . . will become
8 one of the key defining features of the West’s inter-
9 actions with the PRC over the coming decades”.

10 (9) A major asymmetric advantage for the
11 United States in its long-term, strategic competition
12 with the Communist Party of China is the ability of
13 people from every country in the world, regardless of
14 their race, ethnicity, or religion, to immigrate to the
15 United States and become United States citizens.

16 **SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

17 It is the policy of the United States—

18 (1) to continue to reaffirm the principles and
19 objectives set forth in the United States-Hong Kong
20 Policy Act of 1992 (Public Law 102–383; 22 U.S.C.
21 5701 et seq.), including—

22 (A) the “strong interest [of the United
23 States] in the continued vitality, prosperity, and
24 stability of Hong Kong”;

(B) “support for democratization is a fundamental principle of United States foreign policy” that “naturally applies to United States policy toward Hong Kong”;

(C) “the human rights of the people of Hong Kong are of great importance to the United States and are directly relevant to United States interests in Hong Kong and serve as a basis for Hong Kong’s continued economic prosperity”; and

(D) Hong Kong must remain sufficiently autonomous from the PRC to “justify treatment under a particular law of the United States, or any provision thereof, different from that accorded the People’s Republic of China”;

(2) to continue to support the high degree of autonomy and fundamental rights and freedoms of the people of Hong Kong, as enumerated by—

(A) the Sino-British Joint Declaration;

(B) the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, done at New York December 19, 1966; and

(C) the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, done at Paris December 10, 1948;

(A) allowing the people of Hong Kong to govern Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy and without undue interference; and

16 (5) to support the establishment of—

(A) a genuine democratic option to freely and fairly nominate and elect the Chief Executive of Hong Kong; and

(B) open and direct democratic elections for all members of the Hong Kong Legislative Council by the end of 2020;

(6) to support the robust exercise Hong Kong residents of the rights to free speech, the press, and other fundamental freedoms, as provided by the

1 Basic Law, the Sino-British Joint Declaration, and
2 the International Covenant on Civil and Political
3 Rights;

4 (7) to support freedom from arbitrary or unlaw-
5 ful arrest, detention, or imprisonment for all Hong
6 Kong residents, as provided by the Basic Law, the
7 Sino-British Joint Declaration, and the Inter-
8 national Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

9 (8) to draw international attention to—

10 (A) any violations by the Government of
11 the PRC of the fundamental rights of the peo-
12 ple of Hong Kong, as provided by the Inter-
13 national Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
14 and

15 (B) any encroachment upon the autonomy
16 guaranteed to Hong Kong by the Basic Law
17 and the Sino-British Joint Declaration;

18 (9) to protect United States citizens and long-
19 term permanent residents living in Hong Kong and
20 people visiting and transiting through Hong Kong;

21 (10) to maintain the economic and cultural ties
22 that provide significant benefits to the United States
23 and Hong Kong;

24 (11) to coordinate with allies, including the
25 United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Japan, and the

1 Republic of Korea, to promote democracy and
2 human rights in Hong Kong; and

9 SEC. 5. PROTECTION FOR HONG KONG RESIDENTS IN THE
10 UNITED STATES.

11 Section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act
12 (8 U.S.C. 1254a) is amended by adding at the end the
13 following:

14 "(j) PROTECTION FOR HONG KONG RESIDENTS IN
15 THE UNITED STATES.—

16 “(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection, the
17 terms ‘Basic Law’ and ‘NPC’ have the meanings
18 given such terms in section 2 of the Hong Kong
19 People’s Freedom and Choice Act.

20 “(2) DESIGNATION.—

21 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Hong Kong shall be
22 treated as having been designated under sub-
23 section (b)(1)(C), subject to the provisions of
24 this subsection.

1 “(B) PERIOD OF DESIGNATION.—The ini-
2 tial period of the designation described in sub-
3 paragraph (A) shall be for the 18-month period
4 beginning on the date on which the Standing
5 Committee of the NPC promulgates national se-
6 curity legislation with respect to Hong Kong
7 that amends Article III of the Basic Law.

8 “(3) ALIENS ELIGIBLE.—As a result of the des-
9 ignation described in paragraph (2), an alien who is
10 a resident of Hong Kong is deemed to satisfy the re-
11 quirements under subsection (c)(1) (subject to sub-
12 section(c)(3)) if the alien—

13 “(A) has been continuously physically
14 present in the United States since the date of
15 the enactment of the Hong Kong People’s Free-
16 dom and Choice Act;

17 “(B) is admissible as an immigrant, except
18 as otherwise provided in subsection (c)(2)(A);

19 “(C) is not ineligible for temporary pro-
20 tected status under subsection (c)(2)(B); and

21 “(D) registers for temporary protected sta-
22 tus in a manner established by the Secretary of
23 Homeland Security.

24 “(4) CONSENT TO TRAVEL ABROAD.—

1 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of
2 Homeland Security shall give prior consent to
3 travel abroad, in accordance with subsection
4 (f)(3), to an alien who is granted temporary
5 protected status pursuant to the designation de-
6 scribed in paragraph (2) if the alien establishes
7 to the satisfaction of the Secretary of Home-
8 land Security that emergency and extenuating
9 circumstances beyond the control of the alien
10 require the alien to depart for a brief, tem-
11 porary trip abroad.

12 “(B) TREATMENT UPON RETURN.—An
13 alien returning to the United States in accord-
14 ance with an authorization described in sub-
15 paragraph (A) shall be treated as any other re-
16 turning alien provided temporary protected sta-
17 tus under this section.

18 “(5) FEE.—

19 “(A) IN GENERAL.—In addition to any
20 other fee authorized by law, the Secretary of
21 Homeland Security is authorized to charge and
22 collect a fee of \$360 for each application for
23 temporary protected status under this section
24 by a person who is only eligible for such
25 status by reason of paragraph (2).

1 “(B) WAIVER.—The Secretary of Home-
2 land Security shall permit aliens to apply for a
3 waiver of any fees associated with filing an ap-
4 plication referred to in subparagraph (A).”.

5 **SEC. 6. DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF HONG KONG RESI-**
6 **DENTS FOR IMMIGRATION PURPOSES.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—During the 5-year period begin-
8 ning on the date on which the President suspends, in
9 whole or in part, special treatment of Hong Kong under
10 United States law, Hong Kong will continue—

11 (1) to be considered a separate foreign state
12 apart from the PRC in accordance with section 103
13 of the Immigration Act of 1990 (Public Law 101–
14 649; 8 U.S.C. 1152 note); and

15 (2) to be treated as a separate foreign state for
16 purposes of a numerical level established under sec-
17 tion 202 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8
18 U.S.C. 1152).

19 (b) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY OF
20 STATE.—

21 (1) RULEMAKING.—In order to facilitate the fu-
22 ture verification of Hong Kong residency status of
23 visa applicants from the PRC, the Secretary of
24 State, not later than 1 year after the date of the en-
25 actment of this Act, shall issue regulations estab-

1 lishing a process for Hong Kong residents to reg-
2 ister their status with embassies of the United
3 States and the Department of State globally for pur-
4 poses of adjudicating an individual's claim to Hong
5 Kong residency as part of a future visa application
6 for entry to the United States, including through—

7 (A) recording biometric data;
8 (B) officially registering and scanning of
9 birth certificates, residency cards, and other
10 documentation establishing long-term residency;
11 and

12 (C) collecting other personal information,
13 data, and records considered appropriate by the
14 Secretary.

15 (2) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 180 days after
16 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
17 of State shall issue guidance outlining actions to en-
18 hance the ability of the Department of State to effi-
19 ciently share information with the United Kingdom
20 and other allies for purposes of rapidly adjudicating
21 residency of Hong Kong applicants for admission to
22 the United States.

23 (3) BRIEFING REQUIREMENT.—Not later than
24 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act,
25 the Secretary of State shall provide a briefing to the

1 Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, the
2 Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate, the Com-
3 mittee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Rep-
4 resentatives, and the Committee on the Judiciary of
5 the House of Representatives describing the plans to
6 implement the requirements described in paragraphs
7 (1) and (2).

8 SEC. 7. ADMISSION FOR CERTAIN HIGHLY SKILLED HONG
9 KONG RESIDENTS.

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (c), the Sec-
11 retary of Homeland Security, or the Secretary of State,
12 in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security,
13 may provide an alien described in subsection (b) with the
14 status of a special immigrant under section 101(a)(27) of
15 the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C.
16 1101(a)(27)) if the alien, or an agent acting on behalf of
17 the alien—

18 (1) submits a petition for classification under
19 section 203(b)(4) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1153(b)(4));
20 (2) is otherwise eligible to receive an immigrant
21 visa;

1 (4) clears a background check and appropriate
2 screening, as determined by the Secretary of Home-
3 land Security.

4 (b) ALIENS DESCRIBED.—

5 (1) PRINCIPAL ALIENS.—An alien is described
6 in this subsection if the alien—

7 (A) is a citizen of the PRC;

8 (B) was born in, or has been a resident or
9 permanent resident of, Hong Kong for at least
10 years as of the date of the enactment of this
11 Act; and

12 (C)(i) has received a graduate diploma
13 from an accredited institution;

14 (ii) has completed undergraduate or grad-
15 uate education in the United States; or

16 (iii) is the sole or majority owner of a com-
17 pany with more than 50 direct employees or
18 greater than \$5,000,000 in assets.

19 (2) SPOUSES AND CHILDREN.—An alien is de-
20 scribed in this subsection if the alien is the spouse
21 or child of an alien described in paragraph (1).

22 (c) NUMERICAL LIMITATIONS.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—The total number of prin-
24 cipal aliens who may be provided special immigrant
25 status under this section may not exceed 50,000 for

1 any of the 5 fiscal years beginning after the date of
2 the enactment of this Act.

3 (2) STEM DEGREE.—In admitting aliens under
4 this section, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in
5 consultation with the Secretary of State, may give
6 priority to aliens who have earned a college degree
7 in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics,
8 including the physical and life sciences, computer
9 science, engineering, technology, and medicine.

10 (3) EXCLUSION FROM NUMERICAL LIMITA-
11 TIONS.—Aliens provided immigrant status under
12 this section shall not be counted against any numer-
13 ical limitation under section 201, 202, 203, or 207
14 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C.
15 1151, 1152, 1153, and 1157).

16 (d) PROTECTION OF ALIENS.—The Secretary of
17 State, in consultation with the heads of other relevant
18 Federal agencies, shall make a reasonable effort to provide
19 an alien described in subsection (b) who is applying for
20 a special immigrant visa under subsection (a) with protec-
21 tion or the immediate removal from the PRC, to the extent
22 possible, if the Secretary determines that such alien is in
23 imminent danger.

24 (e) ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION UNDER OTHER
25 CLASSIFICATION.—No alien shall be denied the oppor-

1 tunity to apply for admission under this section solely be-
2 cause such alien qualifies as an immediate relative or is
3 eligible for any other immigrant classification under the
4 Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

5 (f) TIMELINE FOR PROCESSING APPLICATIONS.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
7 graph (2), the Secretary of State and the Secretary
8 of Homeland Security shall ensure that the United
9 States Government takes all necessary actions inci-
10 dental to the approval of applications submitted
11 under subsection (a), including required screenings
12 and background checks, are completed not later than
13 2 years after the submission of such applications by
14 an eligible applicant.

15 (2) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding paragraph
16 (1), the relevant Federal agencies may take addi-
17 tional time to process applications submitted under
18 subsection (a) after the 2-year deadline to the extent
19 satisfaction of national security concerns requires
20 such additional time if the Secretary of Homeland
21 Security, or a designee of the Secretary, not later
22 than such deadline—

23 (A) determines that the applicant meets
24 the requirements for status as a special immi-
25 grant under this section; and

(B) notifies the applicant of such determination.

3 SEC. 8. ADJUSTMENT TO LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENT
4 STATUS OF CERTAIN NATIONALS OF THE
5 PRC.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (c)(1), if an alien described in subsection (b) applies for adjustment of status under section 245 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1255) during the period described in subsection (e)(2) of such section—

(B) the Attorney General may waive any other provision of section 212(a) of such Act (other than paragraphs (2)(C), (3)(A), (3)(C), and (3)(E) of such section) with respect to such adjustment for humanitarian purposes, to ensure family unity, or if otherwise in the public interest;

11 (5) section 245(c) of such Act (8 U.S.C.
12 1255(c)) shall not apply.

13 (b) ALIENS COVERED.—An alien is described in this
14 subsection if the alien—

15 (1) faces a fear of persecution on account of his
16 or her political opinion by the Government of the
17 PRC or Hong Kong authorities;

1 (4) was not physically present in the PRC for
2 longer than 90 days after the date he or she estab-
3 lished such permanent residence.

4 (c) CONDITION; DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION.—

5 (1) NOT APPLICABLE IF SAFE RETURN PER-
6 MITTED.—Subsection (a) shall not apply to any alien
7 if the Secretary of State determines and certifies to
8 Congress, before the first day of the period referred
9 to in subsection (a), that conditions in the PRC per-
10 mit aliens described in subsection (b) to return to
11 such the PRC in safety.

12 (2) DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION.—If the
13 President does not made the certification described
14 in paragraph (1) before the first day of the period
15 referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of Home-
16 land Security, subject to the availability of appro-
17 priations, shall—

18 (A) immediately broadly disseminate infor-
19 mation respecting the benefits available under
20 this section to aliens described in subsection
21 (b); and

22 (B) to the extent practicable, provide no-
23 tice of such benefits to the last known mailing
24 address of each such alien.

1 (d) EXCLUSION FROM NUMERICAL LIMITATIONS.—

2 Aliens provided immigrant visas under this section shall
3 not be counted against any numerical limitation under sec-
4 tion 201, 202, or 203 of the Immigration and Nationality
5 Act (8 U.S.C. 1151, 1152, and 1153).

6 **SEC. 9. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State, in con-
8 sultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security and
9 other Federal agencies, as appropriate, shall submit an
10 annual report to the appropriate congressional committees
11 that identifies—

12 (1) the number of Hong Kong residents who
13 have applied for admittance, have been admitted,
14 and have been provided permanent residence in the
15 United States during the preceding fiscal year,
16 disaggregated by visa type or residence status, in-
17 cluding refugee, temporary protected status, special
18 immigrant visa, and legal permanent residence sta-
19 tus provided for under this Act;

20 (2) the number of denials or rejections of appli-
21 cants, including a description of the basis for denial,
22 disaggregated by the basis for denial and by visa
23 type or residency status during the previous fiscal
24 year;

(3) the number of Hong Kong residents that have applied for political asylum during the preceding fiscal year, including the number of rejections, disaggregated by the basis for denial; and

9 (b) FORM.—Each report under subsection (a) shall
10 be submitted in unclassified form and published on a text-
11 searchable, publicly-available website of the Department of
12 State.

13 SEC. 10. STRATEGY FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

14 ON HONG KONG.

15 (a) IN GENERAL.—It is the policy of the United
16 States—

23 (2) to encourage like-minded nations to make
24 similar accommodations for the people of Hong

1 Kong fleeing oppression by the Government of the
2 PRC.

3 (b) PLAN.—The Secretary of State, in consultation
4 with the heads of other Federal agencies, as appropriate,
5 shall develop a plan to engage with other nations, includ-
6 ing the United Kingdom, to carry out cooperative ef-
7 forts—

8 (1) to provide refugee and asylee protections for
9 victims of, and individuals with a fear of, political
10 persecution in Hong Kong, either by Hong Kong au-
11 thorities or other authorities acting on behalf of the
12 PRC;

13 (2) to enhance protocols to facilitate the reloca-
14 tion of refugees and displaced persons from Hong
15 Kong; and

16 (3) to expedite information sharing, as appro-
17 priate, related to individual visa or travel document
18 rejections of applicants from Hong Kong resulting
19 from—

20 (A) national security concerns;

21 (B) fraudulent or corrupt practices related
22 to immigration or victim protection, including
23 refugee and asylee protections; or

24 (C) fraud and corruption.

1 (c) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date
2 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, or
3 his or her designee, shall submit a report containing the
4 plan described in subsection (b) to the appropriate con-
5 gressional committees.

6 **SEC. 11. SUNSET.**

7 This Act shall be effective during the 5-year period
8 beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

